Editorial

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'Public health genetics' has been defined as 'the application of advances in genetics and molecular biotechnology to improve public health and prevent disease' [1]. 'Community genetics' is held by some to be an equivalent term used in Europe [1, 2]. This may be true to a large extent, but I cannot fully agree. First of all – but this is the least important criticism – community genetics is not restricted to Europe. It has crossed the ocean [3, 4], while public health genetics is known in Europe too [5]. Secondly, and more importantly, the emphasis in public health genetics on public health and prevention causes an uneasy sit with reproductive choices. This leads some authors to declare that '... public health agencies cannot play a role in promoting the use of genotypic prevention as a method to improve the public's health' [1]. Well, community genetics would not want to promote 'genotypic prevention' as a means to improve the public's health either, but that is mainly because community genetics' primary aim is not public health and prevention, but information and free choice for all members of the community. Community genetics therefore can include programs involving reproductive counseling, carrier testing, prenatal diagnosis and pregnancy termination without having to excuse itself. So, if we agree with the above citations, the difference between public health genetics and community genetics may be more fundamental than the difference between equivalents as lift and elevator. We must, however, recognize that there are exceptions to the rule that public health agencies do not want to get involved with reproductive programs, and we also should not lose sight of the difference between public health care and public health agencies. But, in general, community genetics has a broader reach than public health genetics. Public health genetics is a nuclear family within the extended family of community genetics. I hope all family members will cherish *Community Genetics* as their favorite journal.

References

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